MOTIVATE MICHIGAN

#PASSMIGOODTIME

REPEAL

TRUTH-IN-SENTENCING

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH

Motivate Michigan Monthly Phone Call..... Tuesday, January 7
Monthly Meeting ..... Tuesday, January 21
Canvassing Training .....Friday, January 24
Kickoff Event, Right to Redemption Ball.....Saturday, January 25

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JANUARY 2020 | @PRISONERLED | ISSUE 4

Michiganians Demand Earned Credits for Prisoners at Criminal Justice Reform Town Hall

Amani Sawari I December 20, 2019 I sawarimi.org

Like many states across the country, Michigan has reached a critical point in the status of its Corrections Department and citizens are fed up. The Department's failures expand across the spectrum of corrections from financially and operatively to their regularly inadequate programming and continually degrading prison conditions. These mounting issues incite the need for deep reforms along with increasingly long average sentence lengths, from 2-4yrs, contributing to massive overcrowding. Recognizing that citizens are desperate for a meaningful solution, decision makers and elected officials came together earlier this month for a Criminal Justice Reform Town Hall at Washtenaw Community College to discuss the needs in our state. Panelists included Attorney General Dana Nessel, Director Heidi Washington, Chief Justice Bridget McCormick, Senator Jeff Irwin and Representative Yousef Rabhi. Washington began the conversation outlining Michigan's recent improvements in its prison system which include a reduction in the amount of people incarcerated from 51,000 in 2007 to 38,000. This is a reduction in the number of people behind bars that's greater than the state of Idaho and Alaska's entire state prison populations over a twelve year period. According to report by the Senate Fiscal Agency, reduction in 13,000 prison beds would result in a $494,000,000 savings. Even with this decrease Michigan still has an incredible amount of work to in order to lower the prison population to a manageable size. Sadly, even with that cut in the prison population Michigan spends over a third of its annual budget, over $2 Billion on corrections alone. Decreasing the number of people languishing in prison will have a positive impact, but this critical situation requires more of decision makers and elected officials than just a reduced population. Significant changes need to be made to the prison population number as well as to its operating structure. We need to develop and implement policies that will reduce not only the number of people in prison but that will also restore people to optimal productivity, help them develop healthy habits and heal them from trauma while encouraging educational and professional achievement that is established while one is incarcerated and can continue to progress with their release from prison.

At this point there is a general consensus on how we ended up in this situation of mass incarceration in Michigan. Irwin explains that our, "failed mental healthcare system puts pressure on DOC". The DOC is not equipped to treat mental illness which results in people suffering from mental illness only getting sicker in prison. With insufficient medical care and normalized medical neglect, the prison environment is disabling. In order to address this, Beaumont plans to open up a new $45 million mental health care facility in Dearborn to better serve Southeastern Michigan.

Rather than prison being a time of disabling idle mischief, Washington shared her vision of, “making prison time productive time by providing meaningful opportunities” to men and women during the time of their incarceration. Washington made multiple references to the vocational villages that Michigan has located at Handlon and Parnall Correctional Facility. Unfortunately these facilities are currently serving no more than 204 students at Handlon and 272 students at Parnell on any given day that the program is operating at full capacity. That is a minuscule fraction of the tens of thousands of prisoners who deserve so much more productivity out of their time incarcerated, whose families and communities deserve more out of the time that their loved one is forced to spend away. Vocational Villages are a step in the right direction but after years of seemingly positive operation at these campuses, the state should be doing more to equip and transform the lives of the many prisoners who are housed at one of the 28 other facilities under Director Washington’s jurisdiction.

In the past, reforms were said to have been impeded by a lack of data to support reform policies. Washington explained that as a data driven department, the numbers had to be logical in order for the necessary changes to be made. Rep. Rabhi added to this, “criminal justice system failures are fueled by economic injustice and racial injustice”. Numbers often fail to give an accurate portrayal of the needs of marginalized populations. The most ‘cost effective’ route may not necessarily be the best solution. In many cases, especially in relation to prison, social consequences are often the result of decisions that are monetarily driven. MDOC must shift from being data driven to people driven in order to effectively transform the lives of those, offenders and victims alike, who are shuffled through its system.

During the event panelists took questions from the audience at which attendees asked about progress on specific reforms that they wanted to see in the state. These included questions about the restoration of Good Time, a system that was repealed by Truth-in-Sentencing in 1998. Today tens of thousands of men and women don’t have access to earned time off of their sentences simply because of the date on which they were sentenced. These ineligible prisoners are the family members and loved ones of millions of desperate Michiganians, many of which were present at the town hall and were holding panelists accountable. While the panelists didn’t have answers as to when or how Good Time would be restored they did express their desire to see a change in sentencing guidelines that restrict earned credits. Elected officials, Rep. Rabhi and Sen. Irwin encouraged attendees to reach out to their offices to voice their support of Good Time legislation as they we were both willing to sponsor or cosponsor such a bill.

Michigan can no longer continue to ignore the critical state of its failing criminal legal system anymore. In an attempt to address mounting concerns the parole board is releasing prisoners at a record high rate, but more is required in order to provide transformative solutions to our criminal legal system. Senator Irwin identified two main issues as it relates to advancing these types of reforms: first “expanding compassion” and second, “make sure that people can see and understand other people in Michigan”. Irwin became emotional as he explained how citizens are failing to see how desperate the criminal legal system is solely because they feel like they couldn’t relate. It should not take your loved on being incarcerated in order for you to care about the conditions of incarceration, the time to care for everyone is today.

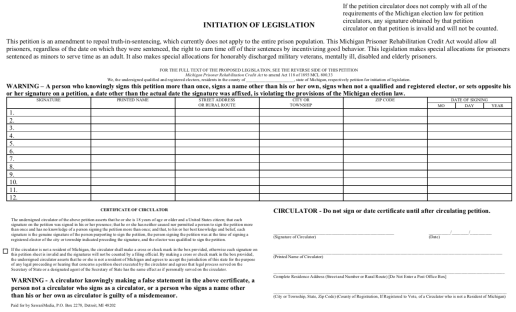
Over the past two years citizens on both sides of the wall have been working together as apart of the Good Time Campaign to Repeal TIS in order to establish an earned credit systems for those prisoners who are currently intelligible. Our Coalition is proud to have developed the Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act (MPRCA) in order to serve all people imprisoned in the state of Michigan. Every person has the right to demonstrate their growth and development regardless of their age or the date that they were sentenced.

The establishment of the Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act (MPRCA) is our opportunity to transform the conditions of incarceration through a petition initiated by the people. MPRCA puts those who are in the process of change into the primary role of their own rehabilitation process by giving them ownership over their path of change. With tens of thousands of adults imprisoned in the state of Michigan, it’s unacceptable that there are less than 1000 people participating in the Pell Grant program to fund prisoners education. MPRCA helps to ‘make prison time productive time’ by incentivizing education, providing earned credits for not only good behavior but also for academic and professional achievement. To learn more about MPRCA please come to our Campaign kickoff event, the Bring them Home Ball on January 25, 2020 at the Black Dragon Motorcycle Club from 5:30p – 9:00p. —

Each One Fill One: Making Change Happen with Everyone's Participation

Sincere Crown Olugbala | December 2019 | MDOC

We must learn that passively to accept an unjust system is to cooperate with that system, and thereby to become a participant in its evil. Dr. King



INITIATION OF LEGISLATION

If the petition circulator does not comply with all of the requirements of the Michigan election law for petition circulators, any signature obtained by that petition circulator on that petition is invalid and will not be counted.

This petition is an amendment to repeal truth-in-sentencing, which currently does not apply to the entire prison population. This Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act would allow all prisoners, regardless of the date on which they were sentenced, the right to earn time off of their sentences by incentivizing good behavior. This legislation makes special allocations for prisoners sentenced as minors to serve time as an adult. It also makes special allocations for honorably discharged military veterans, mentally ill, disabled and elderly prisoners.

FOR THE FULL TEXT OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION, SEE THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS PETITION
Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act to amend Act 118 of 1893 (MCL 800.33

We, the undersigned qualified and registered electors, residents in the county of ____ state of Michigan, respectively petition for initiation of legislation.

WARNING – A person who knowingly signs this petition more than once, signs a name other than his or her own, signs when not a qualified and registered elector, or sets opposite his or her signature on a petition, a date other than the actual date the signature was affixed, is violating the provisions of the Michigan election law.

SIGNATURE	PRINTED NAME	STREET ADDRESS OR RURAL ROUTE	CITY OR TOWNSHIP	ZIP CODE	DATE OF SIGNING MO	DAY	YEAR
1.							
2.							
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4.							
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11.							
12.							

CERTIFICATE OF CIRCULATOR

The undersigned circulator of the above petition asserts that he or she is 18 years of age or older and a United States citizen; that each signature on the petition was made in the presence of the circulator; that the circulator has personal knowledge that each signature is that of the person whose name and last known address of a person signing the petition more than once, and that, to his or her best knowledge and belief, each signature is the genuine signature of the person purporting to sign the petition; the person signing the petition was at the time of signing a registered elector of the city or township indicated preceding the signature; and the elector was qualified to sign the petition.

☐ If the circulator is not a resident of Michigan, the circulator shall make a cross or check mark in the box provided, otherwise each signature on the petition sheet is invalid and the signatures will not be counted by a filing official. By making a cross or check mark in the box provided, the undersigned circulator asserts that he or she is not a resident of Michigan and agrees to accept the jurisdiction of this state for the purpose of any proceeding to enforce the petitioner's obligations under the election law and for the purpose of service of process upon the Secretary of State as a designated agent of the Secretary of State has the same effect as if personally served on the circulator.

WARNING - A circulator knowingly making a false statement in the above certificate, a person not a circulator who signs as a circulator, or a person who signs a name other than his or her own as circulator is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Paid for by SaveaMedia, P.O. Box 2178, Detroit, MI 48202

CIRCULATOR - Do not sign or date certificate until after circulating petition.

_____ _____ / _____ / _____
(Signature of Circulator) (Date)

(Printed Name of Circulator)

Complete Residence Address (Street and Number or Rural Route) [Do Not Enter a Post Office Box]

(City or Township, State, Zip Code) (County of Registration, If Registered to Vote, of a Circulator who is not a Resident of Michigan)

As you should all know this up and coming January we will start collecting signatures for the 2020 campaign initiating Good Time through petition. This is the quickest way to make anything happen especially in Michigan where legislators feel they can keep putting off what needed to be addressed years ago. Its time for us to collectively work and become responsible for ushering in the change we want to see. The most important thing we have to remember on the inside, we are directly connected to the heart of this movement. I can not stress enough how important it is for people to inform their family & friends the role they play in making the success of this petition reality. Their participation is key and its only possible if everyone is involved.

We will be sending canvas and info sheets to as many people as possible. Each canvas sheet will contain 12 slots to be filled by 13 REGISTERED VOTERS. We need you to have your family & friends collect as many signatures as possible and send the canvas sheet back to the P.O.BOX given. We need at least one sheet filled though you, every prisoner is responsible for at least 12 signatures! Working together is the only way we can ensure we reach our goal. And because we are repealing legislation that was enacted by the people we need more signatures to remand the current law, that's 340,047 signatures total. But if even 30,000 prisoners collect 12 signatures from their networks on the outside,

then we will far surpass that goal. If you have friends & family that's incarcerated and would be willing to participate send their name and number to Amani Sawari so we can include them on the mailing list and please encourage them to attend our campaign events.

Its imperative for you to explain to your support circle the impact of the Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act and how they have the power to be the change we all want to see. This year is the perfect time to accomplish our goals since this new law can only be placed on the ballet during even years, we don't want to wait until 2022 or for the state to pass some form of legislation that's counterproductive to the mission. Its better for us if the legislation we're looking for reflects the thoughts and opinions of those effected by the requirements.

Creative ways for your family and friends to get involved, as well as methods for people on the inside:
1. Canvassing at work, talking to coworkers that share a common interest. Its so many people affected by the system rather directly or indirectly that would be willing to help and may not know how.
2. Canvassing at church or whatever religious organization they're apart of. Religious communities are always willing to support a good cause and what's better then being a service to the people then helping the people.
3. Canvassing in the neighborhood. Just about everyone in our neighborhoods have family & friends that's under some form of state supervision. This is a way to get the common unity of our neighborhoods back focus on the people who belong there.

4. Hitting the yard and explaining to people the impact it would have on their sentence. Explain how this fits into their vision and plans upon release.
5. Keeping the conversation alive. This is important because we can't allow the conversation to die out. This has to be talked about daily and stressed even to the point of redundancy. We're in an environment where people don't have the patience to see things through so we have to be the extra emphasis.
6. Be Enthusiastic about getting people involved. People feed off your energy if they sense sincerity in you they're more likely to adopt the same approach.
7. Facilitation, you may have to go the extra mile and sit down with a few people and calculate their time according to the guidelines of the law. This is easy and only takes up to 10 minutes. That way they can see for themselves the results. But it also gives them something concrete for their family & friends. People appreciate knowing exactly what's going to happen if things would change.
8. Don't base your involvement on the next persons participation. We have to be able to make people understand their participation can't be predicated on how many people they see involved. This is one of the main reason why so many people incarcerated fail to participate in any form of organizing. We have to be able to explain why each individual is important in their own right. In closing we have to be the change we want to see. Our collective participation is the only way this legislation is going to pass. We have to remain engaged and active through the entire process. P.E.A.C.E....

Mailing Info
Chanton Miles #619306
Gus Harrison Correctional Facility
2727 E Beecher St
Adrian, MI 49221

We are still seeking poetry and artwork to present at our Right to Redemption Ball later this month. See the flyers to the right for more information. Please send any submissions no later than 1/20/20

DEEP CANVASSING TRAINING
PAID AND VOLUNTEER POSITIONS
January 24, 2020
PASS MI
GOOD TIME
www.mprca.info
TIME: 5:30P - 8:30P
LOCATION: 16300 WOODWARD,
HIGHLAND PARK, MI 48203
Do you want to help make Michigan's prisons safer? Are you curious about how to advocate for and talk through tough topics? Come to our training, learn how to develop your pitch, answer hard questions and get a position working with the Good Time Campaign to Repeal TIS

Inside Coordinator Tasks

Letter Writing Campaign Strategy Kickoff

Each month our campaign will target elected officials at whom I urge you all to write letters to their offices. Every elected officials' office is required to keep a record of all correspondence, and many also take the time to respond. Without voting rights prisoners are restricted from participating in the simplest part of the law making process, voting. However, although our inside supporters cannot legally vote or sign petitions our campagin has found creative ways for our inside supporters to empower this movement and it centers around your participation. You can join us in getting this bill passed by cooridnating on the inside, responding to survey questions that allow us to collect data in support of the campaign, collecting signatures from outside networks, participating in upcoming events by speaking, presenting poetry or artwork and urging your supporters on the oustide to connect with the campaign by attending our meetings and events.

The Letter writing strategy is our establishing a channel of direct communication between you as constituants to your elected officials. Senators and representatives in office are responsible to people in prison and must be held accountable for the conditions of prisons. How can they be held accountable if they never hear from you?

Senator Sylvia Santana (D)

District: 3
Terms Elected: 2016 (House), 2018 (Senate)
Area Represented: Wayne County and includes: Dearborn City, Detroit City, Melvindale City
Committees: Appropriations, Appropriations - Capital Outlay (MVC), Appropriations - LARA, Appropriations - Community Health and Human Policy, Health Policy and Human Services

This month we will be writing Senator Sylvia Santana (D), her office is currently working on a bill to restore earned credits, but the bill has not been introduced yet. We have been in communication with her office about the importance of her bill being inclusive and retroactive but they also need to hear from people on the inside directly.

Contact Info
Sen. Sylvia Santana
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909
517-373-0990
senssantana@senate.michigan.gov

You can participate in this letter writing campaign by writing their office directly with your reasoning as to why Good Time needs to be restored. If you are concerned about whether the office would recieve your correspondence (or if you're low on stamps), we welcome you to write to us at our return address [PO Box 2278, Detroit, MI 48202] and we will forward your correspondence to the proper channels as well as keep a record for follow up, it's your choice. Inside coordinators please collect at least ten letters to send to Sen. Santana's office. You can send multiple letters for her to us in one envelope and we will forward them to her office.

Independent Survey Questions

We appreciate your participation in this Campaign to Repeal TIS in Michigan. The success of this movement depends on your participation. We are collecting a series of responses to the following questions.

1. Would you experience a sentence reduction according to the MPRCA?
2. If so, using the guidelines below how many years would your sentence be reduced by?
a. During the first and second years of his or her sentence, 5 days for each month.
b. During the third and fourth years, 6 days for each month.
c. During the fifth and sixth years, 7 days for each month.
d. During the seventh, eighth, and ninth years, 9 days for each month.
e. During the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth years, 10 days for each month.
f. During the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth years, 12 days for each month.
g. From and including the twentieth year, up to and including the period fixed for the expiration of the sentence, 15 days for each month.
h. Prisoners who were sentenced as adults for a crime committed at the age of 17 or younger must receive an additional 20% of their base credits earned at the 10th year of his or her sentence
i. Prisoners who are honorably discharged military veterans must receive an additional 10% of their base credits earned at the 5th year of his or her sentence
j. Prisoners who have earned a higher education degree or certification must receive an additional 10% of their base credits earned at the time of their degree completion
k. Prisoners who are employed must receive a sentence reduction as follows
i. During the first year 5 days for each month
ii. During the second consecutive year 6 days for each month
iii. During the third consecutive year 7 days for each month
iv. During the fourth consecutive year 8 days for each month
v. During the fifth consecutive year 9 days for each month
vi. During the sixth consecutive year 10 days for each month
vii. During the seventh consecutive year 11 days for each month
viii. During the eighth consecutive year 12 days for each month
ix. During the ninth consecutive year 13 days for each month
x. During the tenth consecutive year 14 days for each month
xi. From and including the eleventh consecutive year 15 days for each month
3. How would MPCRA have a positive impact on the remainder of your sentence? Do you think repealing TIS could have a positive impact on peoples behavior?
4. How are you personally impacted by MPCRA? Why is MPRCA passing significant for you, your family and your community? Released early how could that affect your family, friends and children, if any?
5. What do you plan to do if released early to secure your future in society?

Our goal is to collect around 4,000 responses in order to have a dependable sample size (10% of Michigan's state prison population). The responses to these questions will be used in order to determine a concrete estimate of how many people will be impacted by the change in law repealing TIS. In addition we will be able to determine how much of a decrease we can expect from the $2 Billion that Michigan currently spends on it Corrections Department budget. We ask that each of our inside coordinators collect at least 150 responses to this survey. Please send via mail or over the phone, do not send via jpay.

Responses can be sent anonymously or if respondents decide they can choose to include their PIN along with their responses.

Thank you for your participation.

These are the NATIONAL DEMANDS of the men and women in federal, immigration and state prisons:

1. Immediate improvements to the conditions of prisons and prison policies that recognize the humanity of imprisoned men and women.

2. An immediate end to prison slavery. All persons imprisoned in any place of detention under United States jurisdiction must be paid the prevailing wage in their state or territory for their labor.

3. Rescission of the Prison Litigation Reform Act, allowing imprisoned humans a proper channel to address grievances and violations of their rights.

4. Rescission of the Truth in Sentencing Act and the Sentencing Reform Act so that imprisoned humans have a possibility of rehabilitation and parole. No human shall be sentenced to death by incarceration or serve any sentence without the possibility of parole.

5. An immediate end to the racial overcharging, over-sentencing and parole denials of Black and brown humans. Black humans shall no longer be denied parole because the victim of the crime was white, which is a particular problem in Southern states.

6. An immediate end to racist gang enhancement laws targeting Black and Brown humans.

7. No denial of access to rehabilitation programs for imprisoned humans at their place of detention because of their label as a violent offender.

8. State prisons must be funded specifically to offer more rehabilitation services.

9. Reinstatement of Pell grant eligibility to prisoners in all US states and territories

10. Recognition of voting rights for all confined citizens serving prison sentences, pretrial detainees and so-called "ex-felons." Their votes must be counted. Representation is demanded. All voices count!